

THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK SEA CLAUSE.

From the Pall Mall Gazette.

The conference met on Tuesday, January 7th, in the Foreign Office and immediately adjourned till the 24th instant, when it is hoped a French representative may be able to attend. Meanwhile, in dealing with this matter the Liberal press of London is doing its best to falsify the flattering but quite inaccurate view of the Times, that the daily journals are gradually abandoning "formal partisanship," which only a little while ago discredited the Conservative press almost alone. The competition between the most influential journals in the world, and the journal with the largest circulation in the world, and the journal with a world-wide circulation leads (we have no time to explain how at present) to another sort of competition—namely, as to which of them shall most clearly manifest its consciousness of the honor of being "primed" by a Minister. There are too many signs that in this question of the Black Sea clause this process of priming has been largely and carefully carried out. It is all the more important, therefore, that someone should explain and answer the questions at issue, their origin and true value. A full and interesting account of the negotiations which resulted in the treaty now under consideration will be found in the new number of the Edinburgh Review. For our readers' benefit we note some of the principal features in that narrative.

On the 23d of July, 1854, M. Drouyn de Lhuys wrote to the French Minister at Vienna, pointing out that the facilities which Russia possessed for developing a maritime power in the Black Sea, and a permanent menace to Turkey, and laying down four points for which the Allies were contending. The third of these was that "the treaty of the 13th of July, 1841 (known as the Treaty of the Straits), should be revised by the high contracting parties in the interest of the European balance of power, and with a view to a limitation of the Russian power in the Black Sea." The Allies held to their four points throughout the war, and, above all, to this third point, to which, on the other hand, Russia was equally strenuous and determined in her opposition. Austria, when consulted, declared that without the third point she would not negotiate, and Prussia also accepted it. It was thus incorporated in the memorandum of the 28th of December, 1854, which was the basis of the Vienna Conference.

The revision of the Treaty of July 13, 1841, must have for its object to connect the existence of the Ottoman Empire more completely with the European equilibrium, and to put the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. As to the arrangements to be made in this respect, they depend too directly on the events of the war to be possible at present to determine the basis; it is sufficient to point out the principle.

In the conference Russia declined to make any proposal on the subject. Austria recommended a system of naval equipage—that is, that the two riverain powers, Russia and Turkey, should bind themselves by treaty to maintain in the Black Sea a certain number of ships and no more. France also thought there should be a limitation of naval forces there. Lord John Russell, supporting this proposition, remarked "that the Black Sea was exceptional; that the principle of closing the Dardanelles had been adopted by the public law of Europe; that of the two powers which alone command the shores of the Black Sea the one, already very strong, continually augments its forces, while the other is weakened by her contest with Russia. In this state of things England regards the excessive increase of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea as a perpetual menace hanging over the Bosphorus and Constantinople. To admit that the Ottoman Empire is an essential element of the European equilibrium, and to wish to maintain at the same time a perpetual menace directed against that empire, is a flagrant inconsistency."

While Russia rejected the principle of a limitation of naval forces as incompatible with her dignity, Prince Gortschakoff submitted a document relating the charges against Russia of abusing her preponderance in the Black Sea, and proposing to open the Dardanelles and Black Sea to the flags of all nations on condition that Russian ships should have the right (with the consent of the Porte) to pass out as freely as the others entered. This was negatived absolutely by Turkey, England, and France as totally incompatible with their policy and objects, and the negotiations were broken off. Although Lord Russell, with M. Drouyn de Lhuys, lent towards the principle of a counterpoise between the Russian and Turkish fleets in the Black Sea, the British Government insisted that the limitation should be absolute. In a circular to the Queen's representatives abroad, Lord Clarendon made the following remarks, which have not yet lost their appropriateness or force:—

Russia has asserted that a regard for her dignity precludes her from acceding to the terms proposed by the allies. She has pointed out that the dignity of Russia cannot require that she should be obliged to receive peace, and on the immediate threshold of her weaker neighbor, a force wholly unnecessary for purposes of defence, and even dangerous in the shortest notice to subvert the independence of that neighbor, and to change the territorial distribution of Europe. Yet such is the position which Russia has maintained in the Black Sea, and which she has even now publicly avowed her determination not to renounce.

It is needless to dwell on the absence of any motive of self-preservation to justify this determination on the part of Russia. It would be a mockery to pretend that she has been deterred by the possibility of Turkey; and while Turkey is at peace and free from threatened attack by Russia, and while the Straits are open to the other nations, the Black Sea is closed except to a small and limited number of ships of war of the Western powers. Russia has nothing to fear from the naval forces of England and France; while, on the other hand, the present state of things in the Black Sea demonstrates that when war exists between Russia and Turkey, and when the Straits are consequently open to all the naval forces of the Sultan's allies, England and France, if sufficient time be afforded them, can collect in the Buxine a naval armament strong enough to sweep from the waters of that sea every ship bearing the flag of Russia.

Russia has, it is alleged, that the preponderance which she wishes to maintain in the Black Sea is essential for the security of the Turkish empire against the aggressions of other powers; but it is not necessary to attempt to approach, to provide securities against those ambitious designs of Russia which menace the safety of Turkey and the future repose of Europe; and, in short, to quote the words of a recent Russian proclamation, to prevent, as far as Turkey is concerned, the accomplishment of the wishes and designs of Peter, of Catherine, of Alexander, and of Nicholas.

The Western Powers, in conjunction with Austria, have consistently refused to subscribe to these reasonable proposals; and in their place have actually been secured by restricting within reasonable bounds the power of Russia in the Black Sea. Russia, however, has refused to subscribe to these reasonable proposals; and in their place have actually been secured by restricting within reasonable bounds the power of Russia in the Black Sea. Russia, however, has refused to subscribe to these reasonable proposals; and in their place have actually been secured by restricting within reasonable bounds the power of Russia in the Black Sea.

The effect of this scheme would have been that Constantinople would at all times have been exposed to all the dangers which might have arisen

from the sudden appearance before that city of an overwhelming Russian armament; while the tranquillity of the Mediterranean, and all the great interests in that sea, would have been liable to disturbance by the action of a powerful Russian fleet, sailing forth at any moment from the Buxine. To guard against this danger the Governments of England and France would have been compelled to maintain in the Mediterranean war establishments in time of peace, and permanently to station their armaments at a great distance from their arsenals and resources; so that a peace concluded on such conditions would have been nothing more than an armed truce, instead of the security which is the essence of peace, and unaccompanied by that cessation of expenditure which ought to follow the termination of a war.

On the fall of Sebastopol, and the conclusion of a treaty with Sweden, by which the Allies would have been able to carry the war into Finland, Austria renewed the offer of her good offices, and the four points were again presented in a more detailed form. The third point now took the shape of an agreement that the Black Sea should be neutralized; that its waters should be open to the merchant marine of all nations, but not to any ships of war; that there should be no military arsenals on its banks; and that Russia and Turkey should mutually engage to maintain in the Black Sea only a specified number of light vessels for the service of the coast. Before this was submitted to Russia, it had been warmly discussed by the Western powers. A proposal by France to lower the terms provoked an indignant remonstrance from England, Lord Palmerston declaring that sooner than accept inadequate terms, England and Turkey would carry on the war alone. England insisted that the engagement as to the Black Sea must be embodied in the general treaty with the powers, and must not be modified without their assent. These views carried the day, and on the 6th of January, 1856, Count Nesselrode, accepting the basis of negotiation, thus referred to the third point:—

Article 3 is at bottom only a reproduction of the proposal emanating from the Imperial Cabinet (that is, Russia herself), which your Excellency was charged to communicate to the Austrian Government. We accept it, and thereby consent that the convention to be made between Russia and the Porte for this purpose should be subject to the sanction of the contracting powers. We have only two amendments to propose, one of which is solely intended to make the terms more clear and avoid misconstruction, the other is a trifling addition of a word with reference to the suppression of the slave-trade on the Black Sea coast.

These preliminaries being settled, the Congress of Paris opened on the 25th of February, and on the 4th of March the third point came up for consideration. It was agreed that the Black Sea should be neutralized, and that its waters and ports, while thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, should be "formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war, either of the powers possessing its coasts or of any other power, with the exceptions stipulated in the present treaty." The paragraph as to the prohibition of military arsenals was also adopted. Lord Clarendon pointed out that the maintenance of an arsenal of the first-class at Nicolaief, though not on the shores of the Black Sea, would justify public opinion in "attributing to Russia intentions which she cannot entertain." Upon this the First Plenipotentiary of Russia replied "that the Emperor, his august master, on acceding with sincerity to the propositions of peace, firmly resolved strictly to carry out all the engagements resulting from them; and that in order at once to provide for his engagements and for the requirements of the naval service, the Emperor intends only to authorize the construction at Nicolaief of the vessels-of-war mentioned in the bases of the negotiations." Further, Count Orloff agreed to the insertion of his declaration in the Protocol, adding that to prove his sincerity the Emperor requested a free passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles for the two ships of the line which alone were then at Nicolaief, and which would have to proceed to the Baltic as soon as peace was concluded.

It must not be supposed that the only point at issue is as to the neutralization of the Black Sea. This is the leading question, but a number of other questions hinge upon it. For example, as the Edinburgh Review points out, the arrangements as to the Roumanian Provinces and the navigation of the Danube are more or less dependent on the neutralization of the Black Sea. Indeed, the Danube was opened by Austria on the express condition that no ships of war should be within reach of its mouth. If Austria is not disposed to waive that condition, warship for the Lutherans. Its history dates back as far as early in the sixteenth century, when it seems to have originated in a bequest from John Geiler von Kayserberg, a famous preacher, who lived in Strasbourg thirty-three years, and died there March 10, 1510.

His library of books and manuscripts, which he bequeathed to the town, doubtless formed the nucleus of the public library. The art of printing was then but half a century old, and Kayserberg's collections contained more manuscripts than printed books. It was not, however, until 1531 that the library became known as the "Town Library," but from this date it grew by constant acquisition, until, in our day, having added to itself a large collegiate library, and two or three valuable private collections, it contains one hundred and eighty thousand volumes of printed books, and fifteen hundred and eighty-nine MSS.

Both in early printed books and ancient manuscripts it was eminently rich. Oberlin, once chief librarian, computed the number of its books printed before 1520 at four thousand three hundred, and of these, not less than eleven hundred were without date. Among the collections presented to the library should be mentioned that of John Daniel Schoepflin, a learned historian and antiquary, Professor of Eloquence and History in the University of Strasbourg, in 1720. Schoepflin wrote many local antiquarian works, and numerous small dissertations; one of which latter was an attempt to prove that Gutenberg first practised the art of printing at Strasbourg, which Schoepflin afterwards perfected at Mayence.

The abundant book rarities of the Strasbourg Library were doubtless due to the fact of that city having certainly been the cradle of the art of printing, although Mayence may have been its nursery. But, besides rare books of great value, the library contained one of the finest collections of illuminated manuscripts. Of these, may be especially noted the "Hortus Deliciarum" of Herada, Abbess of Landsberg, one of the most perfect specimens of illumination as practised at the close of the eleventh century. The period of the production of this MS. is believed to have been about 1180. The subjects were miscellaneous, and most elaborately represented by illuminations and miniatures. Diddin, the bibliomaniac, describes it as comprising "battles, sieges, men tumbling from ladders which reach to the sky—condragations, agriculture—devotion, penitence—revenge, murder—in short, there is hardly a passion animating the human breast but what is represented here, it is so perfect in all its parts, and so rich in its particular description, that it may probably vie with any similar production in Europe."

Here, too, were deposited those memorable documents in the lawsuit between Gutenberg and his partner which have thrown so much light on the origin and the history of printing. The deposition in this case was an MS. and contained in a small folio, dated 1439, Diddin questions their authenticity, believing them to have been only attested copies; but he is hardly sustained by evidence. Among the early printed books were copies from the press of Faust at Mayence, Eggesteyn of Strasbourg, and Mentelin of the same place. The latter, who was supposed to be the earliest printer of Strasbourg, was born there, of an obscure family, in 1410. He was originally a writer and illuminator of manuscripts, in the service of the Bishop of Strasbourg; but having got hold of the art of printing, he practised it about 1464-72, printing his first works without date, and passing them off as manuscripts, which were then selling at a very high price. He printed the first German Bible about 1466, and was followed by Eggesteyn, who printed a Latin Bible in the following year.

There were likewise in this library a copy of "Cicero," printed by Faust in 1466; a "Latin Ptolemy of 1462," with fine engraved copper-plates; the "Chronicle of Forestaria," printed in Gothic type in 1474, of which Diddin acknowledges that he never heard of another copy; a copy of "St. Jerome's Epistles," printed by Schoeffer in 1470; a Latin Bible printed by Jansen in 1479; the first edition of "Cicero's Letters to Brutus," printed in 1479; and many others of equal rarity and antiquity.

Besides these specimens of early printing, the Strasbourg Library contained a finely-selected collection of modern books; yet it was only used by the public to the extent of an average daily attendance of fifty readers, of whom many were doubtless tourists and strangers.

Comparatively few white persons are aware of the hygienic qualities of the flesh of this animal, although most of the negroes inherit from their negro parents a knowledge of its beneficial effects on their own race when suffering from depression of spirits, "miserias in the back," and low fevers. There is significance, therefore, in the remark of an old negro, commenting on the illness of another, when he says he "longs for 'possum."

It is not likely that all species of the marsupial possess this quality, but it is certainly to be attributed to those that are frugivorous as our opossum (*Dyalephus Virginiana*) which feeds on persimmons, the small spotted opossum of Australia (*D. halmata*), and some of the African species. We have never met with any record of the healing properties of the opossum's flesh but in the *London Medical Journal*, which was about fifteen years ago. It was a matter of regret that we could not take the periodical from the library of the Smithsonian Institute. In substance, however, it was as follows:—

"When President Roberts, of Liberia, was on a visit to England, he suffered from illness that baffled the skill of his doctors. He was invited, attended by the Queen, hearing of his prolonged illness, with characteristic kindness sent her physician, Dr. Ward, to consult with his medical adviser. In performing the duty he requested the attendance of Dr. Ward, an eminent surgeon on board an American frigate then lying off the coast of Liberia. Dr. Ward suggested to the conferring physicians a complete change of diet, and to their astonishment, strongly advocated the flesh of the opossum, disbelieving in the efficacy of any other remedy. It was determined to follow Surgeon Ward's advice, and, for reasons which need not be stated, the patient in ignorance of the intended change until this peculiar diet was procured. Mr. Cramp-ton, the British Minister at Washington, was thereupon written to enclosing some suggestions of Surgeon Ward as to the part of his native State where opossums could be most easily obtained. This mode of treatment was so novel a thing that the Queen's physician mentioned it in her presence. Her Majesty took an interest in the matter, and requested it might be arranged that his Excellency should undertake the same during the first time in England, at a dinner given at the palace, at which she would be present. The dinner came off as her Majesty suggested, President Roberts occupying a seat opposite her own. The effect was remarkable by the latter, even before the cover of the dish containing an opossum, and his Excellency was removed. On setting the table, the President's physician, clear of the first mouthful he laid down his knife and fork, his face beaming with delight, and exclaimed, in the fulness of his heart, 'It is the gas introduced into the blood of old Virginia!' Recovering, however, his wonted dignity of bearing in a moment, he ate heartily of the opossum's flesh. His convalescence dated from that hour."

Some years after reading the foregoing in the journal quoted, we visited the Library of the Capitol, and on opening *Galignani's Messenger* found that this remarkable cure had been communicated to the Emperor Louis Napoleon. By his directions, some fifty American opossums were introduced into the *Jardin des Plantes*, where they afforded much amusement to the gay Parisians, by the remarkable manner in which, by means of their prehensile tails, they would cling to the branches of trees, and shake themselves. The same journal also states that the Empress Eugenie and the Prince Imperial were highly entertained at the way in which the young opossums would emerge from, and disappear in, the marsupial pouch of the parent.

In conversation lately with Dr. Ward, he informed us of a singular circumstance in connection with President Roberts' cure in Liberia. He says that Mr. Cramp-ton, through the agency of Mr. Robert Willis, employed a colored boy known as Olinger, and Lower Panquier, to catch the opossums, and that afterwards ascertained that Olinger was a nephew of President Roberts.

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